Oct. 14, 1957

OHIO AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
Wooster, Ohio

Forestry Mimeograph No. 36

Forestry in Farm Management*
A Case History

by

Howard M. Call, Farmer
Stow, Ohio

- - -

I consider it a distinct honor to have the privilege of participating in the dedication of this Agronomy and Forestry Building, so appropriately named "Williams Hall" and to have this opportunity of expressing my appreciation to this Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station that has furnished me valuable and timely information in my farming operation for more than a half century. It has been my good fortune to know intimately all the Directors of the Station since its location in Wooster. Each man has contributed substantially to the successful operation of my farm .... Director Thorne through his soil fertility work and discovery of the use of lime, revolutionized my farming system. I wonder what the glaciated area of Ohio would be like today, if the use of lime had not been discovered as a neutralizing agent for acid soils. Director Williams contributed substantially through superior selections of our grain crops and throughout the years I have consistently grown certified seed from the Station's recommended crop varieties. At present I am producing Seneca wheat and Clintland oats.

Director Secrest, a forester at heart, left as a memento, "The Secrest Arboretum" --- he devoted much of his life to the protection and preservation of Ohio's forest land. If you will pardon a personal account, I would like to present a statement by Director Secrest that inspired me with renewed determination to continue the rejuvination of the farm forest. This statement was inscribed on a Forestry Award given

---

*Given at the dedication of Williams Hall, new Agronomy and Forestry Building, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, October 14, 1957

me by the Ohio Forestry Association, and reads as follows: I quote, "Pioneer in Forestry on a Western Reserve Farm, owned and operated by lineal descendents for 140 years, he has demonstrated that a woodland can be maintained and operated as a farm unit, in a farming enterprise conducted under efficient conservation and management practices", end of quote.

To Director Rummell I am deeply grateful for his expanded program of research... each year I look to members of your staff for specific answers to the ever increasing dairy farm problems.

In 1802 my great-grandfather came on horseback from Middletown, Connecticut and purchased 180 acres of land from the Connecticut Land Company at $1.50 per acre. The site later became a part of the Western Reserve and is now in Stow Township, Summit County. The land is rolling, the soil of Rittman and Wadsworth silt loam and was heavily timbered with magnificent specimens of maple, beech, oak, poplar and a sprinkling of walnut, hickory and elms - a few chestnut on a small area of lighter soil. A log cabin was built and in four years sixteen acres of land cleared for the production of crops to provide the necessities of life. In 1828 a dam was built on a stream that flowed through the farm and a sawmill powered by a water wheel, sawed the lumber for a 12-room house that has furnished living quarters for five generations. A barn and other necessary out buildings were also erected.

In 1859 Grandfather Call took over the management of the farm - he was a cooper by trade and thousands of barrels were built from the fine white oak that were available. I read in my grandfather's diary that in 1877 a white oak was cut that was four feet in diameter - 60 feet to the first limb and then a 10-foot log.

My grandfather was the promoter of the first cheese factory in the community in 1870 and for about 20 years - 40 cords of 4-foot wood was cut off the farm as fuel for the factory. In 1880 a fire destroyed the farm buildings except the house, then a new barn 40 x 80 feet was built from farm timber and in 1891 another barn 30 x 50 feet.

In 1895 the remaining virgin timber was cut and sold with the exception of the maples and the woodlot used as a grazing area for the farm livestock for the next 37 years. By this time the forest had the appearance of a city park with a clear view across the tract in all directions and the maples were dying. Thinking that perhaps some insect was causing the damage, I called on Professor Hine, my entomology teacher at Ohio State. After a thorough investigation he assured me the trouble was not insects. I then took the problem to the Extension Agent and he in turn contacted the Extension Forester, F. W. Dean. After a careful on-the-ground inspection, he decided the trees were starving from lack of food and water, due to the grazing and tramping of the livestock. Upon his recommendation, the livestock were fenced out and the tract of 22 acres was certified to the County Auditor for half tax exemption.

Twenty-five years have now passed and nature was allowed to step in and take over the management - first came the seedlings, then the saplings and now young trees 30 to 40 feet high - the dead tops in the virgin maple trees have been replaced by new growth and the forest floor restored. Some planting has supplemented the woodlot management program. In 1886 my Father planted 144 sugar maples on an eroded area bordering the woodlot and today these are our best producing sugar maples.

In 1938 the old wagon shed was torn down and a new machinery shed was built 42 x 80 feet to meet the needs of the expanding mechanized equipment required in the economical production of farm crops. Again the woodlot was called upon to provide the necessary lumber and responded with all the material to erect the building with the exception of the siding.

In 1932 1500 red and white pine seedlings were planted on a steep poverty grass slope - they now provide a beautiful evergreen border near the northwest boundary of the farm. These plantings were also supervised by Mr. Dean. On a northern slope on the farm adjacent to the creek, about 25 large chestnut trees furnished nuts and timber for fence posts until taken by the blight. One of these trees was a persistent bearer of giant sized nuts. In 1877 my Father gathered three bushels of nuts from this tree - sold them for $6.00 a bushel and purchased his first double

barreled shot gun that was made in England. For three generations this tree furnished nuts that provided spending money for the Call children. There is also a magnificent living example of a virgin beech that survived the woodman's axe because my Father carved his name "C. A. Call" on this tree March 1, 1871, when he finished tapping trees and although this took place 88 years ago, it is still very readable.

In 1939 one thousand black locust seedlings were set in an area where thornapple and briars prevailed. These trees have grown vigorously and today would furnish at least 2500 standard sized fence posts -- no farm posts will have to be purchased in the future.

In 1911 the large barn was destroyed by fire. The virgin timber was gone - the woodlot pastured, therefore, no timber was available from the forest for a new barn. This time southern pine was used for the new structure.

The production of maple sugar and syrup has played an important role in the economy of the farm program. It was started by my great-grandfather in 1825 for family use and since 1880 has been sold commercially and the average annual income from this source has provided enough cash to pay the taxes on the entire farm. This sugar camp is the only one operated in Summit County.

On September 13, 1946, the forest was dedicated as Tree Farm No. 10 in the Ohio Tree Farm system, by the Ohio Department of Forestry and the Ohio Forestry Association.

In 1949 under the direction of Dr. O. D. Diller, the woodlot was developed as an experimental forest for Summit County for the purpose of obtaining facts on the rate of growth and yield of forest products. This is Experimental Forest No. 25 in a chain of systematically managed forests throughout the state. The woods was inventoried and 20 permanent 1/5-acre sample growth plots were established. For the first time in my life I was able to comprehend and appraise to some degree the resources of the timbered area.

There are in the woodlot two poplar trees that escaped the ravages of the livestock - they are 28 and 32 inches in diameter and represent a total of about 2,000 board feet. These trees have grown in my lifetime and are living examples of the possibilities of the woodlot had it never been grazed. These two trees have a value of about $200.00. This proves rather conclusively the potential productiveness of the forest under proper management and selective cutting and today would represent an acre value equal to or greater than the rest of the farm.

The forest also has value to a farm besides the timber it produces. It captures the rainfall permitting it to penetrate into the subsoil for underground storage. In fact I have an on-the-spot example of a spring that flowed freely before the virgin timber was cut - went dry during the grazing period and was restored during the period of protection and regrowth. The old farm well, dug by my great-grandfather has responded in the same manner after years of conservation farming.

The woodlot also affects our climatic conditions locally. On a sunshiny day in June the temperature is 20 degrees cooler in the woods than in the meadow. Trees are also appreciated by the livestock - you know where to find them on a hot summer day.

Each year the farm is visited by more than a thousand students from the local and city schools, also Kent State University for field trips to supplement their class room work. There was also a woodlot study recently made by a Kent State University graduate student as material for his thesis. Some of the special groups that have visited the woodlot have been the Ohio Bankers Association, the State Association of Farm Realtors, a bus load of Canadian farmers, Farm Specialists from 11 foreign countries, Garden Clubs, Principals of the county rural schools and members of the County Ministerial Association.

During the past three years sixteen thousand feet of lumber was harvested from mature and cull trees for use in the construction of two pole type buildings - one 45 x 85 feet and one 30 x 45 feet, to provide housing for the dairy herd.

Throughout the years all of the cull and harvested trees have been utilized, the trunk for lumber when sound, and the limbs for sap wood and fuel for the homestead. Besides the monetary return from the forest, the satisfaction derived from harvesting the necessary lumber for maintenance and repairs when the occasion arises, justifies the importance of a thriving woodlot on every farm.

Northeastern Ohio is in the path of a rapidly expanding industrial, highway, and housing development with very little thought or effort being taken to preserve our native trees. On my grandmother's childhood farm that was alloted, not a single tree was left and even the topography of the land was changed to permit the maximum number of homes. In place of vegetation we have concrete and asphalt. In my opinion we need to launch an active and intensive educational program if we hope to preserve our natural resources and our American way of life.

In conclusion may I congratulate the people responsible for the addition of this Agronomy and Forestry Building to the Experiment Station plan; the Legislature that made the funds available; the Director; the Board of Control; and members of the Station Staff that contributed to its plan. If less than 10% of our population shall continue to feed the other 90% on a high caloried diet on more than a million less acres each year, research must play an important part, through higher producing livestock, more tons of forage per acre, higher yielding grain crops, and control of insects and diseases, research in forest tree nutrition, genetics, strip-mine reclamation and wood utilization are essential. A working conservation plan on every farm and last but not least, better trained and more efficient men and women in our laboratories as well as on the land are needed.

- - - - - -